

Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups

The VHPA website states that its first chapter was established in New York in 1970, shortly after U.S. immigration law relaxed restrictions on immigrants from Asia in 1965 (VHPA 2008). Similar to the Balagokulams, VHPA's Bal Vihar program "provides an opportunity for... children to discover their cultural bond with Bharat [India] and develop pride in their Hindu identity," working with young people aged five and older toward developing leadership skills "for the Hindu community in Americas" (VHPA 2014a). Its key activities, as described on the VHPA website, are similar to those of the Balagokulam: yoga, chanting, stories, and prayer (VHPA 2014a). While the VHPA website does not list its Bal Vihar locations, it has contact information for nineteen VHPA chapters as of June 2014 (see below), and according to the VHPA website, each chapter is required to implement a Bal Vihar program (VHPA 2014b).

VHPA family camps, according to the group's website, prioritize "yoga, meditation, traditions, rituals, [and] scriptures" in the practice of "Hindu culture" to help participants "to lead their lives as confident, proud and assertive Hindus," combining Sangh-supported Hindu practices with notions of leadership and pride (VHPA 2014c). In U.S.-based classes and camps, unlike RSS schools in India (e.g. Vidya Bharti schools), there appears not to be the trainings on knife and stick fighting in combination with "the

repeated exhortation to 'defend' the 'nation'" (Sundar 2004: 1610-1611) or an overarching emphasis on the need to defend Hindu women from sexual predation by men of other communities (Ambikar 2008: 209). As well, the Sangh's programs are supplemental to U.S. schools rather than a key vehicle for social upward mobility as they often are in India (see Sundar 2004: 1608-1611). What remains, in India and the U.S., is that while attendees and their families may not be fully devoted to the Sangh's supremacist politics, they "end up with a strong sympathy for the Sangh" (Sundar 2004: 1608). This sympathy can be seen in the continued financial contributions to Sangh groups and the attendance of Indo-American communities in Sangh activities and campaigns, such as the HSS's family camps and Hindu Sangams of 2006— five large public gatherings, described as "grand [Hindu] cultural festival[s]," in different U.S. regions that witnessed more than 1000 participants each, with more than 16,000 attendees in Silicon Valley, according to HSS's press statements (HSS 2006a, b, c). Three of these gatherings featured then-RSS General Secretary Mohan Bhagwat as a keynote or special speaker, enabling the circulation of the Sangh's priorities and reinforcing the Sangh's authority as Hindu leaders in diaspora. Bhagwat became the new RSS Sarsanghchalak (chief) in early 2009 (Indian Express 2009).

Table 1. VHP-America Chapters, 2014

1. Hartford, CT	8. Pittsburgh, PA	15. Chicago, IL
2. Boston, MA	9. New York City, NY	16. Detroit, MI
3. Merrimack Valley, NH	10. Staten Island, NY	17. Cincinnati, OH
4. Washington, DC	11. Broward Palm Beach County, FL	18. Antioch, CA
5. Central & Northern NJ	12. Atlanta, GA	19. Orange County, CA
6. Southern NJ	13. Houston, TX	
7. Lehigh Valley, PA	14. North Houston, TX	

Source: VHPA website, Chapters page (VHPA 2014b).

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Table 2. Attendance and Monies Allocated toward HSS Shakhas and VHPA Bal Vihars, 2002-2012**

Year	# of HSS Shakhas (# of attendees)	Shakha Allocations	VHPA Bal Vihar attendees	Bal Vihar Allocations
2002	30 (750-900)	\$15,000	300	\$17,613
2003	66 (Not specified)	\$42,105.36	300	\$21,046
2004	75 (2000)	\$30,000	300	\$23,045
2005	75 (3000)	\$145,000	300	\$19,028
2006	102 (1500)	\$90,558	Not specified	\$25,330
2007	102 (10,000)	\$132,841	Not specified	\$19,642
2008	102 (10,000)	\$156,051	Not specified	Combined with family camps: \$163,125
2009	140+ (Not specified)	\$140,000	Not specified	Combined with family camps: \$165,050
2010	150+	\$240,000	Not specified	Combined with family camps: \$192,703
2011	150+	\$200,000	Not specified	Combined with family camps: \$305,120
2012	140+ (5000)	\$256,920	Not specified	Combined with family camps: \$325,027
	Total	\$1,448,475	Total	\$1,084,026

For HSS, the figures are from IRS form 990, Part III, row a (2002); Part III, Statement 2 (2003-2004); Part III, Additional data, row d (2005, 2007); Part III, Additional data, row f (2006); Part III, row 4a (2008-2011); Part III, row 4c (2012).

For VHPA-America, the figures are from IRS form 990, Part III, row d (2002), Part III, row c (2003-2007), Part III, row 4c (2008-2012)

Between 2002 and 2012, the HSS and VHPA organizations spent more than \$2.5 million on youth educational programs and family camps combined (see Table 2). How the classes impact student relations to the Sangh's versions of a proud Hindu-- how the Sangh's work intersects with class and race privilege, how it has affected family and gender relations, and interactions with Dalits (formerly "untouchable" peoples), Muslims, Christians and other groups-- is still in need of further research.

While the Balagokulam and Bal Vihar classes generally accommodate students up to 17-18 years of age, for youths that pursue higher education, the **Hindu Students Council** (HSC, identification number 72-1551978) organizes "Campus Study Groups, Classes and Symposia, Seminars, Lectures & Workshops, Celebration of Festivals, Conferences and Camps, Leadership Workshops, Sport & Travel Activities,

Publication & Distribution of Literature" on university and college campuses (HSC 2006). The HSC website in 2009 indicated its presence on 78 campuses in Canada and the United States, including those of Duke, Emory, Johns Hopkins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, McGill, New York University, University of Wisconsin at Madison, Stanford University, Syracuse, University of California at Berkeley, Irvine, and San Diego, University of Ottawa, and University of Texas at Austin and Houston (HSC 2009).

According to Arvind Rajagopal, in 2000 the HSC was producing literature that "[offered] a sanitized version of Hindu culture for youth who express a sense of cultural difference" and disseminating revisionist histories that conceive "Hindu culture [in an] immaculate form... [and that] 'feudal' and 'foreign' influences... contaminated what was once 'perfect'," storying Muslims and

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Christians as unbelonging to the Hindu nation (Rajagopal 2000: 477).

The HSC's activities in more recent times have been scrutinized with concern as well. In April 2007 and January 2008, the community group Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH) released two reports on the HSC's Sangh Parivar connections, noting in a press statement that some chapters have "promoted divisive and sectarian speakers" and that Indo-American students sometimes may join without knowing of HSC's "'invisible' connections" to Sangh politics (CSFH 2007; 2008a; 2008b). The agenda of the HSC at the national level appears not to be enacted homogeneously by its campus chapters. With the release of the CSFH report in 2007, while the national HSC leadership released a press release stating report authors to be "controversial individuals" (HSC 2007), the Stanford campus chapter held a discussion on the report's content, producing two recommendations: 1) to ask the national HSC body to "retract its... rejoinder as it was of a personal nature" and 2) for the Stanford chapter to "recognize that organizations like CSFH can be valuable partners in helping us stay clear of fundamentalism, and thus, their activism is of great benefit and will act as our conscience" (Stanford HSC 2007).

a scholarly examination of legal processes impacting women and religious identities in colonial India and Richard King's 1999 discussion of the political and disciplinary coalescence of "Hindu" as referring to Advaita Vedanta.

¹³ "One Gujarati engineer and his family had packed up, sold their house and abruptly returned to India within a week of their daughter closeting herself in her room with her boyfriend one day for several hours... Telling me [Rajagopal] that story, Mehta drew the lesson. Without constant exposure to Hindu values, and a proper education in Hindu culture, youngsters were liable to go astray, and families would disintegrate. Here the VHP of America was able to step in..." (Rajagopal 2000: 474).

¹⁴ See the next section on donations to Sangh-affiliated charities.

¹⁵ According to Hinduunity.org's domain name registration.

Notes

¹⁰ E.g. non-Vedic, lower caste, syncretic.

¹¹ According to earlier versions of the HSS website; chapter street locations have subsequently been removed.

¹² The term "traditional" refers to something closer to "Brahmanical" in Hindu nationalist discourse, downplaying the diversity in South Asian traditions, a connection aided by histories of consolidations of Hindu identities in upper-caste terms-- e.g. see Agnes, Sudhir, and Basu 2004 for

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Charities: Funding Sangh Projects**

In 2002, Sabrang Communications and South Asia Citizens Web co-published a report, "The Foreign Exchange of Hate," which linked the Maryland-based **India Development and Relief Fund** (IDRF, identification number 52-1555563) to Sangh projects and groups in India (Sabrang and SACW 2002). The document reported that between 1994-2000, 50% of IDRF disbursements went to Sangh Parivar groups in India, and more than 80% of the relief and development work supported by the disbursements were "clearly sectarian in nature"; as well, the report found that the IDRF-funded groups "in at least three states in India that are directly involved in large scale violence against Muslim and Christian minorities" (Sabrang and SACW 2002: 6). The report was supported by more than 250 U.S.-based faculty of South Asia and contributed to the halt of employee donation matching to the IDRF by Silicon Valley corporations Cisco and Oracle (Swapan 2002).

Since 2002, IDRF has continued to channel millions of dollars to India, much of it to undisputed Sangh-affiliated development and relief groups with projects in India, including Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA, Param Shakti Peeth, Sewa Bharti, and Sewa International (see Table 3).

The group's distribution of charitable funds to India has concentrated in development and relief work, with significant emphasis in Adivasi ("first inhabitants"/tribal/indigenous) communities. Since the 1960s, the Sangh has been expanding development projects into tribal and rural areas in India, cultivating allegiance to the Hindu nation among the communities in these regions (Hansen 1999: 103; Independent People's Tribunal 2007: 11-12). Others have

On March 9, 2002, while news of the mass killings and attacks on Muslims in Gujarat by Sangh Parivar members were still in the Indian and international news media, the IDRF held a "Donor Appreciation" event at Sunnyvale Temple in California (Watson 2002). According to an India Post article covering the event, five hundred persons attended the dinner, and the event's co-sponsors included the HSS, VHPA, and Ekal Vidyalaya. An HSS representative stated at the event that the "Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), its counterpart in India was actively involved in building Gujarat back to its highest glory." The same article states as well that Sewa Bharti, the RSS's service wing, was the "main NGO selected by IDRF [to carry out relief work]" (India Post News Service 2002).

spoken out in concern regarding the Sangh's reference to Adivasis (first inhabitants) as Vanvasis (forest dwellers) in the Hindu nation, seeing this maneuver as a "deliberate policy of the Sangh to deny the tribals the status they deserve" (Philip 1999). In 2002, newspapers and human rights reports pointed with concern to the participation of Adivasis, Dalits, and lower caste communities in the anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat, noting that the Sangh's work to cast Muslims as enemy to Adivasis and Dalits "diverts attention from the basic economic, social and political issues haunting the oppressed" (Chenoy et al 2002; Iliaiah 2002). Thus far, the poor brought into the Hindu nation's social order, including Dalits and Adivasis, have appeared to serve as its foot soldiers in violent actions against Muslims (e.g. in the case of Gujarat 2002) and Christians (e.g. in the case of Orissa 2007-2008, see Chatterji 2008 and Independent People's Tribunal 2007: 10-12). It is with this in mind that we examine the following chart of IDRF disbursements and fund recipients, to raise the necessity for clarifications and investigations into the effects of the following allocations.

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Table 3. IDRF Disbursements and Supported Organizations, 2002-2012**

Year	Total Disbursement	Top 5 Recipients
2002	\$1,269,443 to 117 recipients	Manav Kalyan Trust - Kutch (Gujarat) - \$52,780 Vikas Bharati Bashunpur - Ranchi (Jharkhand) - \$49,550 Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram - Jashpurnagar (Chhattisgarh) - \$48,760 Sookruti - Bhabaneswar (Orissa) - \$48,165 Sarathi, Godhar Pashchim, Dahod (Guajrat) - \$42,800
2003	\$1,267,951 to 50+ recipients	Arya Samaj Gandhidham Charitable Trust, Gandhidham (Gujarat) - \$102,120 INDI Corps- Houston (Gujarat) - \$59,685 Shree Banaskantha Anjana Patel Kelawani Mandal - Palanpur (Gujarat) - \$43,295 Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram - Jashpurnagar (Chhattisgarh) - \$43,000 Sewa Bharti - Bhopal, (Madhya Pradesh) - \$42,270
2004	\$1,325,773 to 94 recipients	Shree Banaskantha Anjana Patel Kelawani Mandal - Palanpur (Gujarat) - \$104,876 Shree Ram Gram Vikas Samiti - Nagauri - Meerut (Uttar Pradesh) - \$104,333 Sevalia Arogya Mandal, Kheda (Gujarat) - \$81,721 Arya Samaj Gandhidham - Kutch (Gujarat) - \$78,000 Veeryantan Vidyapeeth - Bhuj (Gujarat) - \$55,000
2005	\$2,484,160 to 91 recipients	Sewa International - Delhi - \$298,301 Arya Samaj - Gandhidham (Gujarat) - \$290,000 Sukh Ram Gram Vikas Trust - Kaliravan (Haryana) \$150,000 Shiksha Bharati - Hapur, UP - \$120,000 UN Foundation, Washington D.C. USA - \$110,000
2006	\$1,759,319 to 58 recipients	Sewa International, Delhi - \$391,100 Akhil Bhartiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram - Jaspur Nagar (Chhattisgarh) - \$142,300 Sukh Ram Gram Vikas Trust - Hisar (Haryana) - \$100,000 Vivekananda Kendra International - Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu) - \$100,000 Vikas Bharati Bishanpur - Ranchi (Jharkhand) - \$76,450
2007	\$1,483,445 to 56 recipients	Maharaja Agrasen Shiksha Samiti - Agra (Uttar Pradesh) - \$123,000 Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana - Bangalore (Karnataka) - \$100,000 Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram - Jashpurnagar (Chhattisgarh) - \$87,200 Sahaj Seva Samsthan - Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh) - \$79,500 Sewa Bharti Madhya Pradesh - Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) - \$79,320
2008	\$1,255,960 to 43+ recipients	Sahaj Seva Samsthan (Hyderabad) - \$83,300 Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India (New Delhi) - \$73,000 Rajesh Gangadhar Patel Charitable Trust (Gujarat) - \$60,000 Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Chhattisgarh) - \$55,000 Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (Chennai) - \$52,500
2009	\$2,473,252 to 41+ recipients	Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India (New Delhi) - \$525,000 Bharat Kalyan Pratishthan (New Delhi) - \$209,000 Param Shakti Peeth (Delhi) - \$208,000 Jan Kalyan Shiksha Samiti (Delhi) - \$66,000 Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Chhattisgarh) - \$60,000
2010	\$1,864,075 to 50+ recipients	Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India (New Delhi) - \$335,000 Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (Bengaluru) - \$199,000 Sewa International (New Delhi) - \$91,000 Param Shakti Peeth (Delhi) - \$85,000 L Muni Lal Bansal Charitable Trust (Jagroan, Panjab) - \$83,000
2011	\$1,039,780	No schedule of recipients. Indify (USA) - \$11,500
2012	\$1,086,600 to 33+ recipients	Maharaja Agrasen Technical Education Society (Himachal Pradesh) - \$245,000 Sahaj Seva Samsthan (Hyderabad) - \$92,000 Samerth Charitable Trust (Gujarat) - \$78,050 Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (Karnataka) - \$75,000 Arpana Research and Charitable Trust (Harayana) - \$63,500

Source: IDRF tax returns, Form 990, Schedule of Grants, 2002-2012.

Figures for total amount disbursed for 2008-2012 were from Part I, line 13.

The figure for Indify in 2011 was from Schedule I, Part II, part (a).

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The 2002 report on the IDRF encouraged further scrutiny on other financial channels to the Sangh of India. In the United States, four additional major development-related charities (organizations channeling more than \$100,000 annually to charitable projects) have connections to Sangh leaders in the U.S. or India: **Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA** (EVFA, tax identification number 77-0554248), **Param Shakti Peeth** (tax identification number 71-0916422, more information on page 20), **Sewa International-USA**¹⁶ (tax identification number 20-0638718), and the **VHP of America**. From 2001-2012, these five Sangh-affiliated charities allocated more than \$55 million, largely to projects in India (see Table 4). These more-visible Sangh-affiliates, whose leadership overlaps with that of other U.S. Sangh groups (see Appendix A) do not

mention the major Indian wings of the Sangh (RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal) in their tax records, perhaps due to the intense critical scrutiny brought by the 2002 report on the IDRF. Attesting to the work that the Sangh has done for the last three decades among middle-class Indo-American communities, other charitable groups do clearly designate the Indian Sangh in their filings: for instance, according to respective tax returns, **Hindu Charity Trust of Texas** (identification number 51-0555401) donated \$7,000 each to “Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation” and “RSS village schools” in 2006, and \$14,000 to “VHP schools” in Gujarat in 2007, and **Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation** (VWEF, identification number 59-3623323) allocated \$10,000 to the “Vishwa Hindu Parishad” in 2006 for “education, medical aid and relief to the poor in India” (emphasis added).

Table 4. Monies Allocated to Program Services by Sangh-affiliated Charitable Groups, 2001-2012*

Year	EVF-USA	IDRF	VHP – America†	Sewa Int’l	Param Shakti Peeth of America
2001	\$0	\$2,047,593	\$963,689		
2002	\$788,500	\$1,280,788	\$383,191		
2003	\$953,600	\$1,285,644	\$317,043		(Registered 2004)
2004	\$1,795,880	\$1,335,625	\$280,909	(Registered 2004)	\$186,461
2005	\$1,870,500	\$2,495,265	\$503,400	\$146,159	\$155,230
2006	\$2,032,780	\$1,759,319	\$255,423	\$293,930	\$202,000
2007	\$2,718,111	\$1,483,445	\$95,911	\$94,863	\$443,062
2008	\$3,081,505	\$1,255,960	\$343,404	\$305,002	\$80,000
2009	\$2,910,820	\$2,473,525	\$192,961	\$269,370	\$400,000
2010	\$3,029,485	\$1,864,075	\$213,952	\$303,079	\$256,000
2011	\$3,597,810	\$1,039,780	\$215,235	\$1,226,407	\$156,000
2012	\$4,264,915	\$1,086,600	\$205,732	\$759,785	\$25,000
Total	\$27,043,906	\$19,407,619	\$3,970,850	\$3,398,595	\$1,903,753

Source: Tax Returns, *Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation USA* (2001-2012), for IDRF (2001-2012), *VHP of America* (2001-2012), *Sewa International* (2005-2012), and *Param Shakti Peeth of America* (2004-2012).

*For EVF-USA and IDRF: the figures are from IRS form 990, Part III, row f (2001-2007) and Part III, row 4e (2008-2012).

†For VHP-America, the figures are from IRS form 990, Part III, row a + b (2001-2007) and Part III, row 4a + 4b (2008-2012), for charitable donations going to projects likely taking place in India.

For *Sewa International*: the figures were drawn from IRS form 990, Part II, row 22a (2005-2006), form 990-EZ, Part II, row 22b (2007), form 990-EZ, Part I, row 10 (2008-2009), and form 990, Part I, row 13 (2010-2012).

For *Param Shakti Peeth*: the figures are from IRS form 990, Part I, row 13 (2004-2007 and 2010-2012) and IRS form 990-EZ, Part I, row 10 (2008-2009).

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Figure 3. Percentage Breakdown of Total Program Expenditures of 5 Sangh Charitable Groups, 2001-2012
Total expenditure: \$55+ million

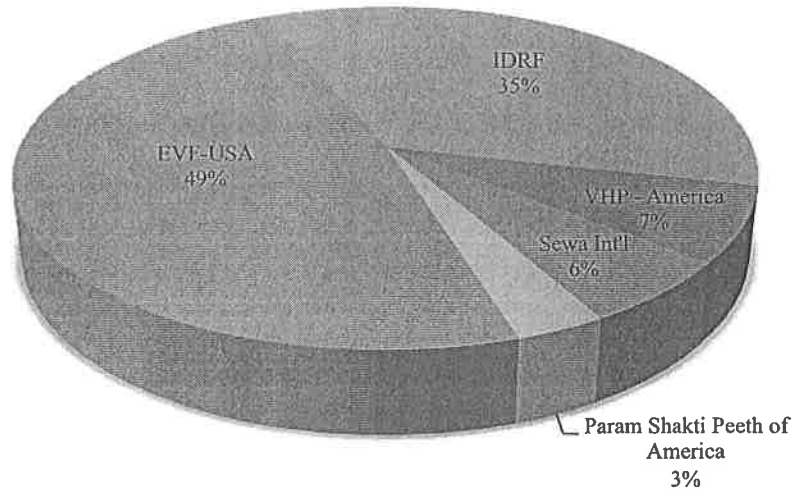
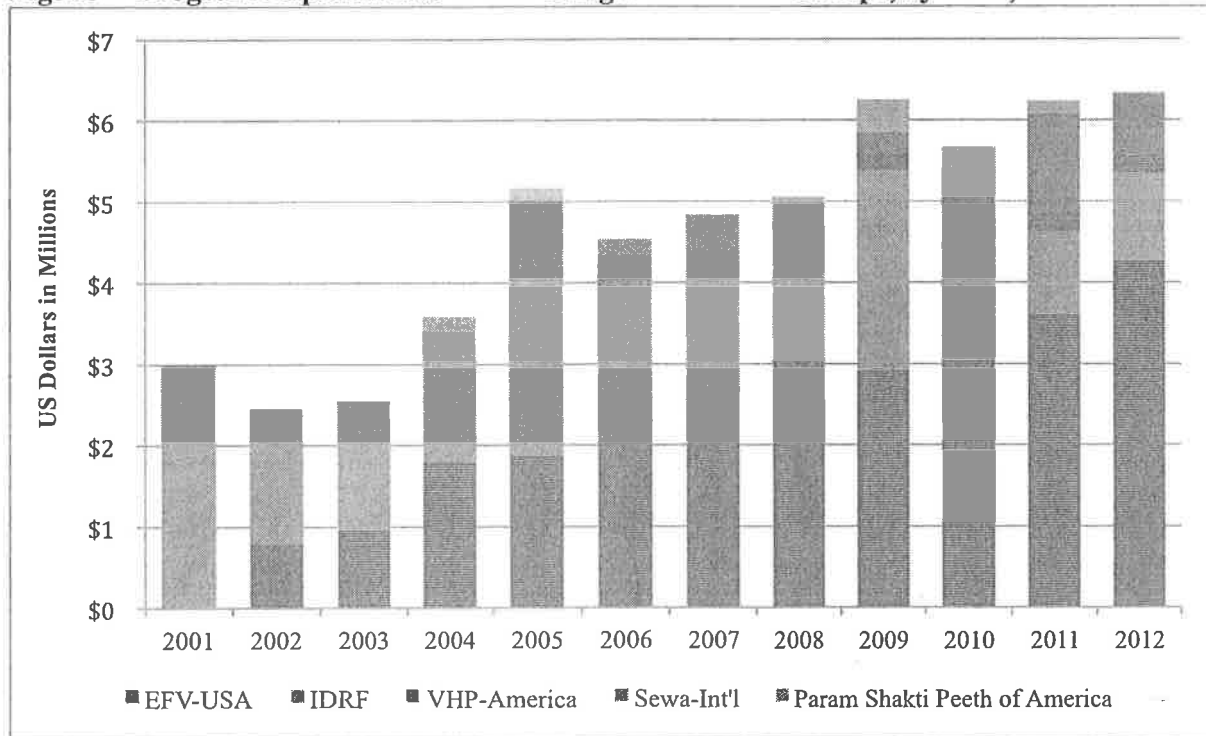


Figure 4. Program Expenditures of Five Sangh Charitable Groups, by Year, 2001-2012



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Param Shakti Peeth is the U.S. wing of Vatsalya Gram, an Indian charity undertaken by VHP leader Sadhvi Rithambara (Vatsalya Gram 2010). Rithambara was among the defendants charged in 2005 by a Central Bureau of Investigation court for crimes of "provok[ing] people into rioting, arson and indulging in rioting with intent to create disorder" in relation to the mass violence against Muslims connected to the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992 (The Hindu 2005; Puniyani 2003: 137).

What happens to the monies allocated by Sangh charities to India? The 2004 Awaaz-South Asia Watch report on the U.K.-based HSS's Sewa International found that the earthquake relief work funded and carried out by Sangh-affiliates in Gujarat included discrimination against Muslims and Dalits, threats against the workers from other relief groups, and the building of schools that propagate the Sangh's ideology (Awaaz 2004: 17-32).

Two examples of projects funded in India by U.S.-based Sangh affiliates point to the need for further investigation: the Lodai project and the Ekal Vidyalayas (one teacher schools) in tribal and rural regions.

Lodai: While VHPA Executive Vice President Gaurang G. Vaishnav has claimed that the VHPA is "independent of any organization, whether in the US or anywhere else, legally, organizationally and fiscally," VHPA-VHP cooperation is clear in the case of Lodai, an earthquake-struck village in Gujarat (Vaishnav 2008). According to a letter sent by VHPA President Jyotish Parekh to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom on June 12, 2002, the VHP of America's Gujarat earthquake relief work included adopting the village of Lodai (Parekh 2002). Edward Simpson and Stuart Corbridge's 2006 study, published in the Annals of the Association of American Geographers, found that the "VHP took care

to rebuild Lodai as Keshav Nagar, or Krishna's city" where "Muslims and [scheduled caste persons] who previously lived in the village of Lodai had not been allowed to settle within the gates of the new community"; Lodai's Muslim and lower caste communities were aided by another charitable group, receiving "plainly inferior accommodation... once it was clear that the VHP's plans for Keshav Nagar were geared only to caste Hindus" (Simpson and Corbridge 2006: 579). India-based community groups and news media have corroborated reports of discrimination as well in the Sangh Parivar's earthquake relief work.¹⁷

Ekal Vidyalayas: In addition to discriminatory distribution of relief resources in India, donations to Sangh development projects may also be used for purposes different from how they are framed in tax materials and donation appeals. For instance, the stated goal of the **Ekal Vidyalaya ("One Teacher School") Foundation of USA** (EVFA, identification number 77-0554248) is to "eradicate illiteracy" and contribute to "self-development" in Adivasi and rural areas, according to its website; the discourse is one of development and poverty reduction (Ekal Vidyalaya 2014). In India, the VHP leadership has publicly stated that Ekal Vidyalayas train tribals to confront the (Hindu) nation's internal and external enemies. In March 2008, VHP General Secretary Praveen Togadia, a Sangh leader at the national level, urged the Indian government "to involve tribals in the battle against Maoists," stating that the VHP had implemented 23,000 Ekal Vidyalayas and that "the Maoist threat did not exist in villages where VHP's schools were operating" (Press Trust of India 2008). Eight years earlier, Togadia was already stating that the VHP would establish Ekal Vidyalayas "to prevent conversions [from Hinduism] and to check subversive activities of the inter-services intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan [Pakistan's

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intelligence agency]" (The Times of India 2000).

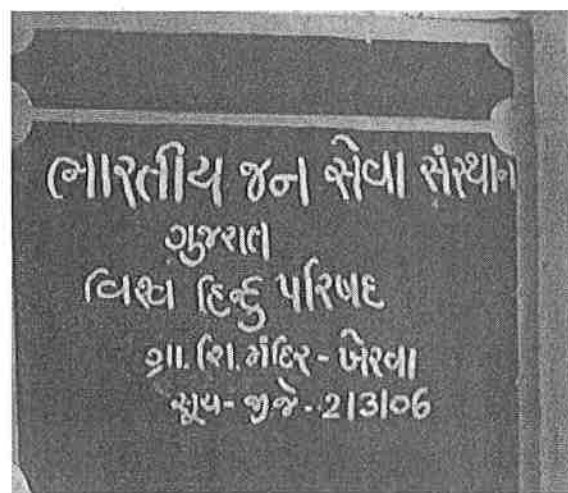
The Ekal Vidyalaya organization is also linked with sub-state institutions of national defense. According to a June 2010 Ekal Vidyalaya newsletter: the organization also supports the state-sanctioned paramilitary Village Defence Committees (VDCs)¹⁸ in the region of Kashmir by including VDCs of Jammu on the itinerary of its Ekal Global Learning tours. These tours bring Ekal Vidyalaya leadership and volunteers to India to meet and form relations with people there (Ekal Vidyalaya 2010). This national security and anti-conversion discourse is not strongly emphasized in the Ekal Vidyalaya's online materials.

The Sabrang-SACW and Awaaz reports both pointed to links between Sangh work in tribal areas and the increase in Adivasi participation in Sangh-led violence against minorities (Sabrang and SACW 2002: 18-24; Awaaz 2004: 33-34). In 2005, Avdhash Kaushal from the Government of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development released a report on the Ekal Vidyalayas and its partner organization, the Friends of Tribal Society (Vanbandhu Parishad), charging them with "misusing... funds, and using the [government] grants for creating disharmony amongst religious groups and creating a political cadre," resulting in the end of government funding to these schools (Joshua 2005; Kaushal 2005). Adivasi and other human rights activists have also reported that the Ekal Vidyalayas appear to function as a "vanguard" of Sangh expansion into tribal areas (Gopalakrishnan and Sreenivasa 2007; Independent People's Tribunal 2007: 85-89).

It is difficult to believe that the U.S. Ekal Vidyalaya leadership and its major donors can be unaware of the Sangh of India and its politics; according to publicly available tax returns, the EVFA board of directors at one time included Sangh-affiliated Ramesh Shah (a Vice President of Overseas Friends of

the Bharatiya Janata Party, see below and OFBJP 2009), Jyotish Parekh (VHPA President, according to VHPA's 2008 tax return) and VHPA Founder and former president Mahesh Mehta (Saigal 2004). A separate organization, **Ekal Vidyalaya Global, Inc.** (identification number 20-5356631) was registered in 2008; according to its application for tax-exempt status (form 1023), its founding board of directors included billionaire Bhupendra Kumar Modi as chairperson and member Mahesh Mehta. Modi and Mehta also served as founding board chairperson and vice-chairperson, respectively, of the U.S.-based VHP-Overseas, according to the VHPO's tax application for tax-exempt status.

Other signs of Sangh affiliation on the Ekal Vidyalaya website include its list of partners in India, such as the RSS's service wing Sewa Bharti (see Ekal Vidyalaya 2009) and photographs from its online gallery such as the one below, which clearly indicate a connection between Ekal Vidyalaya's Gujarat partner, Bharatiya Jan Sewa Sansthan, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, in Gujarati:



A fragment of a photograph from the Gujarat photo gallery on Ekal Vidyalaya's website.

*Translation of the first three lines in Gujarati:
"Bharatiya Jan Sewa Sansthan / Gujarat / Vishwa
Hindu Parishad" (Ekal Vidyalaya 2007).*

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Figure 5. Donation Recipient Profiles: The Lodai Project and the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India**

Recipient Profile: Relief and Rebuilding at Lodai, Gujarat	Recipient Profile: Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acknowledged as a VHPA project by VHPA President Jyotish Parekh. ◆ Noted as a VHP project by researchers. ◆ Same researchers documented that the VHP's aid was geared toward caste Hindus and Muslims and lower caste persons were not allowed to return to the rebuilt village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acknowledged by VHP General Secretary Praveen Togadia as a VHP project. ◆ In 2005, a report from the Government of India Ministry of Human Resource and Development on the Ekal Vidyalayas and their partner, the Friends of Tribal Society (Vanbandhu Parishad), charging them with "misusing... funds, and using the [government] grants for creating disharmony amongst religious groups and creating a political cadre." The government ended funding to both organizations. ◆ Adivasi and other human rights researchers have also reported that the Ekal Vidyalayas appear to function as a "vanguard" of Sangh expansion into tribal areas. ◆ The Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India received more than \$27 million dollars from the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA between 2002 and 2012.

The need to clarify the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA's connections to the Sangh's actions in India has been brought up by others, such as Priya Abraham of the Institute on Religion and Policy (Abraham 2009). As of June 2012, Ekal Vidyalaya of America continues to hold fundraisers and channel funds to India (Ekal Vidyalaya 2012).

Notes

¹⁶ In 2004, the U.K. community group Awaaz-South Asia Watch linked Sewa International's U.K. chapter to Sangh projects in India in its report, "In Bad Faith?: British Charity and Hindu Extremism."

¹⁷ The Indian People's Tribunal report on the Gujarat earthquake aftermath, released August 2001, also refers to an investigation conducted by the Indian Social Action Forum, which stated: "The role of the RSS in getting relief to the upper castes among the Hindus in particular has been blatant. In Anjar, for example, the well-tended RSS camp which houses only Hindus and barring a handful of exceptions, only caste Hindus, sits cheek by jowl with another in which the far poorer population of the homeless Anjarites - Muslims mostly and a substantial number of lower caste Hindus - live. All of this is being accepted without question and rationalised on the basis that we

cannot expect anything other than that people will 'naturally' help 'their own'" (IPT 2001). As of 2004, news media also circulated this understanding, as with this Frontline article: "Reports [in the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake in 2001] allege that the RSS distributed relief selectively to upper-caste victims, neglecting Dalits and Muslims. The RSS also organised shakhas [local chapters] in relief camps. At Adhoi village, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) preachers gave lectures every night on the need to be vigilant against Christians and Muslims. RSS volunteers allegedly threatened other relief workers with harm unless they left Kutch" (Bunsha 2004).

¹⁸ From the International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir report, *Buried Evidence*: "VDCs are made operational by security forces and supported by the state. VDC members are recruited by Hindu nationalist/militant groups, and are organized as civilian 'self-defence' campaigns and militias. In the understanding of local communities these campaigns are staged as retribution for anti-national activities. A network of VDCs has been instituted throughout the Jammu region and in certain parts of Kashmir. VDC personnel are predominantly of Hindu and Sikh descent, and in some instances include Muslim villagers deemed 'trustworthy' by VDC personnel" (IPTK 2009: 17).

Hindutva in Academic Arenas

Hindutva relies on notions of a “Hindu culture” that is “simplified, easily comprehensible, and commonly accessible,” a “set of common symbolic denominators acceptable across sects and castes... in consonance with ‘the Spirit of Hinduism and the Hindu Nation’” (Hansen 1999: 102; Thapar 2000b). In academic disciplines that focus on India and Hinduism, especially religious studies and history, Hindu nationalist discourses are aided by an already-prevalent “Western Orientalist tendency to establish [the upper-caste tradition of] Advaita [Vedanta] as the ‘central theology of Hinduism’... [helping] in the perpetuation of the view, both in India and abroad, that Hindu thought is Vedanta and little else” (King 1999: 135). Hindu nationalist investment in Brahmanical traditions and Vedic studies— including financial and social support for research into scripture, medicine, astrology and other fields connected to the Vedas— is supported by the Orientalist grain of “focusing upon [sacred texts] as the essential foundation for understanding the Hindu people as a whole,” resulting “inevitably... [in] the denigration of heterogeneous Hindu beliefs and practices as ‘distortions’ of the basic teaches of Vedanta” (King 1999: 101, 135). This maneuver downplays the complex histories of resistance to caste oppression and non-Vedic lives (Thapar 2000a); the cultural exchanges between India, Rome, China, and other parts of the world from the early centuries of the Common Era (Thapar 1966: 109-121); the non-conquest arrival of Zoroastrians (Thapar 1966: 172); and the ongoing disintegration of tribal cultural worlds (Devi 1995).

The Sangh’s efforts in higher education include the establishment and strengthening of academic and para-academic institutions and projects connected to Hinduism, religious studies, Indic studies, psychology, Ayurvedic medicine, yoga, and

technologies connected to the Vedic times. As Hindu nationalist histories and narratives are confronted and refuted by historians and scholars like Arjun Appadurai, Angana Chatterji, Steve Farmer, Dwijendra Narayan Jha,¹⁹ Romila Thapar,²⁰ Kamala Visweswaran, and Michael Witzel,²¹ Sangh-affiliated groups have bolstered their positions by funding institutions and projects in higher education, including a religious college, a biennial conference, and grantmaking foundations. These activities draw upon the experiences, resources and abilities of middle-class and professional segments of the diaspora, while continuing a trend of the Indian nationalist and upper-class elite to assert claims of a “Hindu” spiritual superiority in the context of political subordination (Chatterjee 1993: 121).

Hindu University of America (HUA, identification number 59-2977691) provides institutional support for persons in academic fields prioritized by the Sangh. The school is an educational wing of the VHPA, with its conceptualization in 1985 noted as a significant occurrence in VHPA history (VHPA 2008). The school was granted tax-exempt status in 1992, and its tax records included records of donations from “VHP”. According to its 2004 tax return, Hindu University board of directors includes:

1. Braham Aggarwal - Secretary and Treasurer of the Florida chapter of the VHPA 2000-2004 (Florida Secretary of State 2000-2004)
2. Ram P. Agarwal - President of the Florida chapter of the VHPA 2000-2004 (Florida Secretary of State 2000-2004)
3. Mahesh Mehta - Founder and former president of VHPA at the national level (Saigal 2004)

Hindu University’s July 2003 newsletter names two other Sangh leaders as members of the board: -

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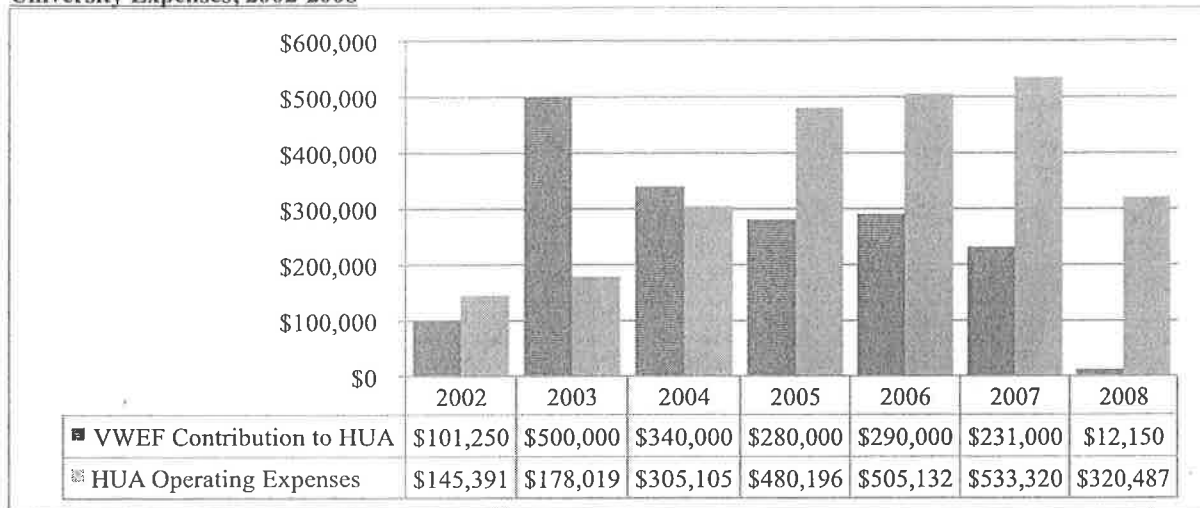
4. Beth Kulkarni - at one time the President of the Texas Chapter of the VHPA (Kamath 2000)
5. Yash Pal Lakra - President of the national-level VHPA for five years, ending in 1999 (VHPA 1999)

Through coursework and degrees offered, Hindu University of America focuses on the following areas: Hinduism, Hindu Philosophy, Yoga Philosophy and Meditation, Yoga Education, Sanskrit Studies, Vedic Astrology, Sri Aurobindo Studies, and Ayurveda, continuing to prioritize these cultural practices and forms as "Hindu" (Hindu University of America 2010b). The school was incorporated in Florida in 1989 and began providing correspondence courses in 1993, then implemented residential curricula in October of 2002 (Kolapen 2002: 312-313). The school awards graduate-level degrees, though it is not presently accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional accreditation body for institutions of higher education in Florida (SASC 2013). In 2003, according to a March 2004 Hindu University newsletter, the school awarded its first master's degree in Vedic Astrology, and its first doctorate of Hindu Studies in "Yoga Philosophy and Meditation" in 2005 (Hindu University of America 2005). According to its 2007 tax return, it received more than \$470,000 in contributions and a little more than \$50,000 in program revenue, while spending more than \$225,000 toward its operations. Of note are the donations of Sangh-affiliate **Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation** to the Hindu University (see Figure 6).

The VWEF's connections to the Sangh are clear; its donation recipients include: Hindu University of America, Param Shakti Peeth, Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Sewa Bharti (the RSS's relief and social service wing in India) and HSS, as documented in the VWEF tax returns from

2000-2003. Per its 2004 tax return, its board of directors includes: IDRF founder Vinod Prakash, VHPA leader Mahesh Mehta, and Braham Aggarwal (of Hindu University of America and VHPA, see Appendix A). According to VWEF's tax returns from 2006-2012, **Hindu American Foundation** leaders have served on the VWEF board as well: Suhag Shukla from 2006-2008 and Nikhil Joshi from 2009-2012 (see section below).

In contrast to VWEF, **Infinity Foundation** (identification number 22-3339826) supports Hindutva by distributing its monies in a more diffuse manner: through offering book grants and concentrating funding on university departments and other academic institutions. The Foundation has not claimed to be part of the Sangh Parivar, though the Foundation's tax returns indicate that the organization has donated to U.S. Sangh affiliates **Hindu American Foundation** (2007), **World Association for Vedic Studies** (2007, 2008), **California Parents for the Equalization of Educational Materials** (2008), and the **Educator's Society for the Heritage of India** (2008), each of which are discussed elsewhere in this report. Infinity Foundation's other funding recipients include: Delhi-based Center for the Study of Developing Societies, the Sanskrit and Indian Studies Department at Harvard University, Columbia University's Department of Religion, and Association for Asian Studies (see Table 5). In the case of Harvard, Infinity Foundation's gift of \$50,000+ corresponded with a "visiting position in Indic Studies at Harvard University, in its Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies," imbued with the social standing of an academic position in the Sanskrit and Indian Studies Department at Harvard University (Infinity Foundation 2003). More recent writings by Malhotra indicate that the Infinity Foundation is likely no longer giving monies to Harvard University's humanities departments that focus on South Asia (Malhotra 2010).

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Figure 6. Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation Contributions to Hindu University and Hindu University Expenses, 2002-2008**

For VVEF, the figures are from IRS form 990, Part III (2002-2007) and IRS form 990, Statement 5 (2008).

For HUA, the figures are from IRS form 990, Part I, row 17 (2002-2008).

The status of a grantmaking foundation can also serve as a launchpad in efforts to discredit and target academics. Infinity Foundation president Rajiv Malhotra has channeled considerable effort writing against scholars like Angana Chatterji and Wendy Doniger, attacks that Martha Nussbaum has characterized as “sarcastic and intemperate... [showing] little concern about factual accuracy,” and while Malhotra has not openly advocated violence, his “irresponsible characterizations of other people’s work have done much to foster a climate in which such threats can be made” (Malhotra and Neelakandan 2011: location 4327; Nussbaum 2007: 248, 257). There are several scholars, targets of Malhotra, who have functioned as a warning to others considering research connected to South Asia.

1. According to Infinity Foundation’s 2002 tax return, the foundation gave \$14,500 to California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) that year, when Malhotra wrote an opinion piece against institute faculty Angana Chatterji, implying she is a “sepy” and “Macaulayite” (Malhotra 2002). Reportedly,

the foundation was negotiating an endowment with the school that year as well, and the negotiations were unsuccessful.

2. Paul Courtright received multiple threats of violence from others after Malhotra wrote about him (Vedantam 2004).

3. Claremont McKenna professor Cynthia Humes reported that she received “a barrage of Internet venom by colleagues of Malhotra” after she delivered a paper on Malhotra’s use “of philanthropy to influence members of the academy” (Humes 2006).

4. Jeffery Kripal, after receiving death threats and becoming the target of a failed campaign to have Rice University rescind a job offer, now makes minimal reference to India in his work (Nussbaum 2007: 251).

Though it is uncertain how many times such strategies have been utilized at other schools, the chilling effect on scholarship and scholarly debate has been real, and further research is necessary to document the effects of Infinity

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Foundation's grantmaking (see Table 5 a list of major allocations from 2001-2013).

While certain scholars and scholarship are targeted by the Infinity Foundation, others are given support. One of the Infinity Foundation's Sangh-affiliated donation recipients in 2006 is the **World Association for Vedic Studies** (WAVES, identification number 72-1350935), which holds a conference every two years to enable Hindu nationalist proponents to showcase and circulate their work. WAVES aims, as stated on its application for tax-exempt status (form 1023), "to conduct multidisciplinary activities for research and study of Vedic and ancient Indian traditions including its history, philosophy, science, psychology, literature, scriptures, linguistics, [and] archaeology..." According to the WAVES Articles of Incorporation, the founding board of directors consisted of: Bhu Dev Sharma, one-time president of Hindu University (Hindu University of America 2010a), Hindu University adjunct faculty members Subhash C. Kak, David Frawley, and Klaus Klostermaier (Hindu University of America 2004: 2), Shiva G. Bajpai of California (who played an important part in the Sangh's textbook campaign in 2005-2006, see Visweswaran et al 2009: 106-107 and Maira and Swamy 2006).

In July of 2006, WAVES's three-day conference took place at the University of Houston in Texas, hosting approximately 150 scholars and 1000 participants, according to a conference press release (Kulkarni 2006). Noted as the sixth in a series of international conferences, the gathering featured presentations in the fields of history, scripture analysis, politics, medicine, and spirituality, spheres where Hindu nationalism is, or is becoming, a major contending force. Despite the claim in WAVES's application for non-profit status (form 1023) that the organization "is and shall be a non-sectarian, multidisciplinary academic organization and

would not be governed by any ideology," the chairman of the local conference organizing committee, Subhash Gupta, is an HSS leader in Houston,²² and the gathering hosted several key Hindu nationalist figures (WAVES 2006a). Among the conference's supporting organizations are other Sangh affiliates: Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Param Shakti, and the VHP of America (WAVES 2006b). The themes of WAVES presenters requires further exploration, to examine the Sangh narratives energized through this para-academic space.

Notes

¹⁹ Dwijendra Narayan Jha stated before the Indian History Congress, which had just elected him as its General President for its 66th session: "Historians cannot be the custodians of religion: our task is to critically examine it" (Jha 2006: 47).

²⁰ A distinguished historian of Ancient India, Romila Thapar is a Professor Emerita of Jawaharlal Nehru University and was appointed the first holder of the Kluge Chair in Countries and Cultures of the South at U.S. Library of Congress (Library of Congress 2003). Thapar has written and spoken to debunk and critique Sangh narratives that support homogenized identities and justify Hindutva's violence (see Thapar 2000a, b, c, Thapar and Mukta 2000, Thapar and Witzel 2006).

²¹ Scholars and faculty of and from South Asia have often supported anti-Sangh campaigns, as with the case of the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate report on the IDRF in 2002 (Swapan 2002) and the California textbook controversy in 2005-2006 (Visweswaran et al 2009: 101).

²² In a July 2006 Indo-American News article on the WAVES conference, Subhash Gupta is identified as "the present Vice President of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) and a past President of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) Texas Chapter" (Giri 2006).

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Table 5. Infinity Foundation Allocations, 2001-2013 (Selected)**

Year	Contributions, Gifts, and Grants Paid	Selected Recipients of \$10,000 or more
2001	\$345,945	Association for Asian Studies (\$10,000) Auroville International (\$27,500) Harvard University (\$51,200) Indian Institute for Forest Management (\$13,500) Tibet House (\$67,060) University of Hawaii (\$26,500)
2002	\$312,790	Association for Asian Studies (\$16,000) California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) (\$14,500) Center for the Study of Developing Societies (\$10,000) Columbia University, American Institute of Buddhist Studies (\$15,000) Columbia University, Department of Religion (\$10,600) University of Hawaii, Department of Philosophy (\$41,000)
2003	\$390,054	Center for the Study of Developing Societies (\$10,000) Columbia University, Department of Religion (\$66,300) Harvard University- Sanskrit and Indian Studies (\$53,500) Malagiri Sri Aurobindo Center (\$15,000) Melbourne University and Sophia International affiliate [Name redacted] (\$16,600) National Institute of Advanced Studies- Bangalore, India (\$10,000) Rutgers University Foundation- Religion Department (\$10,000) Tibet House (\$33,990)
2004	\$208,193	Center for the Study of Developing Societies (\$22,650) Mahila Haat (\$14,600) Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center - Auroville- New York (\$11,000) University of Hawaii, Department of Philosophy (\$10,000) Virginia Commonwealth University (\$32,500)
2005	\$107,310	All India Movement Aim for Seva (\$10,000) Center for the Study of Developing Societies (\$13,000) University of Hawaii, Department of Philosophy (\$12,500)
2006	\$55,600	Mahila Haat History Series/Seminar (\$34,350)
2007	\$74,013	Graduate of University of Texas, Austin [Name redacted] – Writing Grant – (\$17,500) Mahila Haat History Series/Seminar (\$33,000)
2008	\$109,076	Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (\$15,000) Mahila Haat (\$27,500) [Name redacted] – Research and Writing - U Turn Theory (\$13,938.75) [Names redacted] – Writing an Academic Book (\$15,000)
2009	\$106,356	Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (\$10,000) [Name redacted] – Research and Writing - U Turn Theory (\$17,849) [Name redacted] – U Turn Theory (\$15,459.93)
2010	\$88,633	[Name redacted] – Gent University Research Center – Research Grant (\$10,000) University of Mass – Dartmouth, Center for Indic Studies (\$10,000)
2011	\$100,999	Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (\$10,000) [Name redacted] – Research Scholar and Editor (\$14,880) [Name redacted] – Research Scholar and Editor (\$31,500)
2012	\$16,779	No grants \$10,000 or more.
2013	\$34,581	[Name redacted] – Research Scholar and Editor (\$17,083)
Total	\$1,950,329	

Source: Total disbursement figures are from IRS form 990-PF, Part I, row 25 (2001-2013). Recipient information is from grantee lists included with each tax return.

Leadership in Indo-American Communities

Though those who participate in the Sangh's service work in India have often sought to be "aloof from politics" (a phrase used by M.S. Golwalkar, quoted in Jaffrelot 1996: 62), Hindutva-supporting public relations and lobbying groups and Sangh public campaigns have made their presence felt with increasing intensity and widening scope over the last few years in the United States. With the escalation of Sangh violence in India over the last two decades, a network of U.S. Sangh groups has emerged to enable associations with the Sangh that are socially and politically acceptable and desirable, given that a powerful segment of its constituency are "well-to-do US-based professionals... likely to be wary of controversy" (Rajagopal 2000: 475). Below are some of such organizations and a few of the major activities and events that mark the Sangh's rise as leaders in Indo-American communities.

One of the key Hindu nationalist political parties at the national level in India, the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**, receives support from the **Overseas Friends of the BJP (OFBJP)**, whose U.S. chapter's website states that it aims to "[project] a positive and correct image of India and its people in the in the U.S. and foreign media" (OFBJP 2012). The OFBJP, which is not a tax-exempt group, appears to be able to mobilize a significant level of resources from the upper-classes of the diaspora; when then-Indian Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee visited New York in 2000--when the BJP led the coalition government that ruled India--the OFBJP organized a "Hindutva fête" with a reported cost of approximately \$400,000 (Someshwar 2000). Since then, it has continued to raise the profile of the BJP and the Sangh with Indo-Americans and U.S. politicians. On March 21, 2002, three major Indo-American community groups--the Association of Indians in America (AIA), the Indian

American Forum for Political Education, and the National Federation of Indian Associations (NFIA)--worked with the OFBJP to sponsor a Congressional luncheon on Capitol Hill, even as anti-Muslim violence in BJP-ruled Gujarat were still filling Indian and international news, including reports of complicity on the parts of BJP leaders and police (Association of Indians in America 2002; Bedi 2002).

OFBJP figures were also among the group that planned to honor Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi at the Madison Square Garden Theater in 2005, the **Association of Indian Americans of North America** (Narendramodi.net 2005). Modi had also been invited by the **Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)** to address its annual convention that year (Sen 2005). The news of his possible visit to the U.S. prompted vocal and widespread protests from community groups, scholars, and organizations supporting religious freedom and pluralism, who formed the Coalition Against Genocide (see CAG 2005; 2012). On March 18, 2005, the U.S. State Department denied Modi a diplomatic visa, as his visit did not qualify for one, and revoked his tourist and business visa under the Immigration and Nationality Act Section 212(a)(2)(g), as a government official who "was responsible for carrying out... severe violations of religious freedom" (Mulford 2005). The **Hindu American Foundation**²³ (HAF, identification number 68-0551525), among other groups, protested Narendra Modi's ban in a public demonstration (Joseph 2005).

Before 2005, Hindu nationalism's public campaigns included protesting the representations of Hindu gods in the TV show *Xena: Princess Warrior* and a campaign to remove the images of Hindu deities from toilet seats led by VHPA's **American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD)** and **Indiacause** (Shankar 1999; Indiacause 2000). Such campaigns appeared to rally a wider

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segment of middle-class diasporic communities and involved the distribution of public statements to the media and letter-writing campaigns, largely mobilized online, bolstering the Sangh's authority 1) to assess the accuracy of Hindu representations and 2) to speak for certain segments of Hindus. In 2005, this project of correct representations expanded as many of the groups named thus far were among the 80 that formed the **Hindu Council Initiative**, including HSS, VHPA, HSC, **Educators' Society for the Heritage of India (ESHI)**, identification number 20-1200065), **Hindu International Council Against Defamation (HICAD)**, identification number 22-3810334), Hindu University, and **Barsana Dham (now JKP Radha Madhav Dham)/Vedic Foundation** (identification number 74-2673063). One explicit goal of this council is to "[correct] biased and distorted views of the Hindu traditions in educational institutions and media" (Jha 2005).

In 2005-2006, many of these groups or their members were part of a campaign to insert Hindu nationalist histories into California textbooks, including the downplaying of certain gender and caste oppressions (more on the California textbook campaign see Visweswaran et al 2009, Maira and Swamy 2006 and Taneja 2006). This time the Sangh's mobilization was extensive: at the forefront were HSS-run **Hindu Education Foundation**, the **Vedic Foundation**, and **Hindu American Foundation**, backed by families, youth, other U.S.-based temple and community groups. The Vedic Foundation also hired a public relations firm, **Ruder Finn** (Burress 2006a).

After South Asia scholars, South Asian community groups, Dalit and tribal groups raised objections, the State Board of Education refused to accept most of the Sangh's proposed edits in California textbooks (see Thapar and Witzel 2006 and Visweswaran et al 2009). At this time, the

Hindu American Foundation retained the law firm **Olson, Hagel and Fishburn** to sue the California Board of Education at the state level while **California Parents for the Equalization of Educational Materials (CAPEEM)**, identification number 56-2565521)²⁴ was formed to sue the State Board of Education at the federal level (Burress 2006b; CAPEEM 2006). According to their 2007 tax returns, the HSS and the Infinity Foundation each donated \$5000 to CAPEEM, aligning with CAPEEM's goals. The HAF case ended in September 2006, with the court "dismiss[ing] Hindus' claim of bias" (Burress 2006c). In February 2009, a court ruled against CAPEEM's allegations of bias in relation to textbook content (Swapan 2009), and the federal case was closed officially in June 2009 (Joseph 2009).

With the HAF and CAPEEM cases fading from widespread attention after 2006 and both failing to establish bias against Hindus, the Sangh seems to be backing away from public legal strategies and investing more energy into building a public relations infrastructure— networks of information and resources to bolster the Sangh's versions of culture and identity and its legitimacy to speak on behalf of Hindus to U.S. audiences. The HAF continues to serve in such a role (see Table 6).

The **Educators' Society for the Heritage of India (ESHI)** is another. Like the Vedic Foundation and HSS's education wing **Hindu Education Foundation**, ESHI is an organization that seeks to "[provide] authoritative information and resources related to India's heritage, culture, history, Dharma, philosophy, theology and languages, to schools and colleges, teachers, curriculum developers, authors, publishers, education officials, policy-makers, media, interfaith organizations, non-profit organizations, leaders and the public in North America" (ESHI 2009). Its leadership, from its "About Us" webpage, includes VHPA and Hindu

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University leaders: Mahesh Mehta (VHPA), Vice Presidents include Beth Kulkarni (VHPA, Hindu University), and Abhinav Dwivedi (Hindu University). ESHI leader, Ved Chaudhary, is also a contact for HICAD and the registrant for its website (HICAD 2011).

California was among other South Asian groups that submitted an amicus curiae brief in opposition to the HAF lawsuit in 2006 (Ambedkar Center for Justice and Peace et al 2006).

Despite the volume of evidence presented by politicized community groups connecting the U.S. groups to Hindu nationalist politics, faculty testimonies against the Sangh's textbook campaign,²⁵ and the objections of lower-caste communities²⁶—support of, and indifference to, the Sangh's politics continues to circulate in Indo-American communities.

Notes

²³ Despite the claim that the "Hindu American Foundation is not affiliated with any religious or political organizations or entities" on its website, HAF president Mihir Meghani was identified on the VHPA website as a former VHPA National Governing Council member and as a member of the HSS by the defenders of the IDRf (HAF 2014c; Rao et al 2003; VHPA 2001). More of HAF's Hindu nationalist connections can be found in Table 6.

²⁴ CAPEEM's application for tax-exempt status (form 1023) states that HICAD "supports the objectives of CAPEEM and is raising funds for CAPEEM."

²⁵ Testimonies and letters (one signed by 47 academics of ancient India and another signed by 109 South Asia faculty) were once hosted at Southasiafaculty.net. Some letters can still be found on Friends of South Asia's California Textbook pages (Friends of South Asia 2012).

²⁶ During the 2005-2006 textbook controversy, members of a Guru Ravidass Gurudwara community in California testified before the California State Board of Education against the Sangh's edits. The Guru Ravidass Gurdwaras of

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Table 6. Hindu American Foundation's Hindu Nationalist Connections**

Date	Connections
2001	HAF co-founder Mihir Meghani was on the VHP of America Governing Council and a member of the HSS (VHPA 2001; Rao et al 2003).
2005	HAF supported the HSS's educational wing Hindu Education Foundation and Vedic Foundation in the California textbooks controversy and brought a lawsuit against the California State Board of Education (Visweswaran et al 2009: 108).
2006-20012	According to Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation's tax records, HAF leaders have served on the VWEF board: Suhag Shukla from 2006-2008 and Nikhil Joshi from 2009-2012. During these years the VWEF contributed funds to Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, HSS, Hindu University, Param Shakti Peeth, Sewa Bharti Bhopal, and Vishwa Hindu Parishad.
November 2009	Sheetal Shah, Development and Outreach Director of HAF, attended and spoke at the "Hindu Dharma Sabha" in New Jersey, organized by Forum for Hindu Awakening and self-identified Hindu nationalist group Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (News India-Times 2009).
2012	HAF and the VHPA's Hindu Mandir Executive Council collaborated on a Hindu Chaplaincy Program (VHPA 2012).
December 2012	HAF co-founder Aseem Shukla wrote an opinion piece, "Absurd to deny Modi a US visa" in India Abroad (Shukla 2012).
February 2013	HAF was among the groups lobbying U.S. Representative Mike Honda to stop his support of the continued visa denial of Narendra Modi (Jha 2013).
December 2013-2014	HAF made public statements against House Resolution 417 (Sohrabji 2013; HAF 2014b).
2014	VHPA leaders Kavita Pallod and Rishi Bhutada are on the HAF Executive Council and Board of Directors, respectively (HAF 2014a). Both have served as directors of a VHPA youth camp in Texas (Chugh 2012; Giri 2005).

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Further Steps**

So far we have looked at four general areas where the U.S.-based Sangh Parivar and its allies have concentrated a significant amount of resources and labor among more affluent segments of diasporic communities. Though there is increasing availability of newspaper coverage, academic research, and human rights and government reports on the Sangh's violent actions in South Asia, support for the Sangh remains strong among elite and middle-class leaders and families in the diaspora. The available tax materials (charted in this report) indicate that participation in the Sangh's public programs and donations to its non-profit wings have continued.

Given the available information on the U.S.-based Sangh organizations and the continued discrimination, threat, and violence carried out by the India-based Sangh, some urgent questions that need investigation and clarification include:

1. Legal culpability of U.S.-based Sangh groups and members in Sangh-led violent acts in South Asia. Independent and transparent investigations are necessary to confirm or refute the U.S.-Sangh's responsibility in any crimes committed overseas. Relevant U.S. laws may include the Alien Tort Claims Act (28 U.S. Code 1350) and Conspiracy to Kill, Kidnap, Maim, or Injure Persons or Damage Property in a Foreign Country (18 U.S. Code 956). Further research is needed into the exact nature of the decision-making and forms of collaboration between U.S. and India-based Sangh groups. If further investigations find any of the above groups to be legally responsible for violence in South Asia, those culpable must be held accountable and answer to those that have been brutalized.

2. Possible violations of 501(c)(3) regulations and restrictions. As noted in the

above section on the Ekal Vidyalaya educational project, newspaper and testimonies from community activists indicate the possibility that the one-teacher schools function to recruit tribal youths into the Sangh's anti-conversion and anti-minority activities through this literacy campaign. Independent verification of U.S. Sangh's compliance with 501(c)(3) regulations is important, in order to a) end non-compliant activities connected to discrimination and violence; b) support transparency in charitable funding; c) document the exact flows and uses of resources and monies and their effects in the U.S. and South Asia; and d) enhance public understanding of where and how the U.S. Sangh operates. Should non-compliance with 501(c)(3) regulations be found, authorities will be notified for further verification and action as appropriate.

While there is no international consensus on standards of transparency for non-profit relief/development organizations, international projects such as the Global Reporting Initiative have developed guidelines that can provide a starting point in discussing possible standards and protocols for assessing and documenting an organization's human rights protections and violations (Global Reporting Initiative 2010).

3. The involvement of other U.S.-based actors in supporting Hindu nationalist extremism. The U.S. Sangh's work is linked to other individuals and organizations that may not explicitly identify themselves as members of Sangh family, as with Infinity Foundation. Research into Sangh actions are needed in the corporate business world (including corporate development projects and professional associations), in connection with foreign direct investments to South Asia, in temple²⁷ and regional-linguistic communities, and in lobbying U.S. and Indian politicians at all levels. Further investigations are needed

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into the fundraising circuits that are enabled and provided for Indian Sangh leaders in the above areas. Various community groups have already produced reports, issued statements, and led efforts to raise public awareness about the U.S. Sangh's politics: Campaign to Stop Funding Hate, Coalition Against Genocide, Friends of South Asia, Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America, Indian American Muslim Council, South Asia Citizens Web and Wire, faculty of Southasiafaculty.net, and other activists and scholars (Sabrang and SACW 2002; CAG 2005; CSFH 2007). Raising public awareness and energizing discussion and debate on the Sangh's role in Indo-American communities may help to inform effective and timely responses on the part of communities and U.S.-based leaders, toward empowered collective reflections and actions toward justice and accountability in relation to this long-distance nationalism.

Notes

²⁷ In recent years, the VHPA has been holding annual conferences of temple leadership in the United States and Canada, the "Hindu Mandir (temple) Executives Conferences" (HMEC). In 2009 the conference was attended by representatives from 113 temples (VHPA 2009a).

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Appendix A: Leadership overlaps between Hindu nationalist affiliated organizations**

	Sangh Affiliation	IDRF	Sewa International	EVFA	VWEF
Braham R. Aggarwal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHPA-Secretary/Treasurer-FL chapter (Florida Secretary of State 2000-2004) • Hindu University of America - Board of Directors (HUA 2004 tax return) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson of Park Square Enterprises, which borrowed \$4 million from IDRF in 2004 (IDRF 2004 tax return) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor of \$1.8 million in 2005 (India-West 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (VWEF 2004 tax return)
Gautam Desai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSS- Alameda (Uppal 2000) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President (Sewa International 2008 tax return) 		
Beth Kulkarni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHPA-President-Houston Chapter (Kamath 2000) • Hindu University - Board of Directors (HUA 2003) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals Preparer (Kulkarni 2001) 			
Yash Pal Lakra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of VHPA, 1994-1999 (VHPA 1999) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact for Ekal Vidyalaya on the VHPA website (VHPA 2009b) 	
Mihir Meghani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHPA- Governing Council Member (VHPA 2001) • HSS Member (Rao et al 2003) • HAF Co-founder and on the Board of Directors (HAF 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote public letter in support of IDRF (Meghani 2003) 			
Mahesh Mehta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHPA- Founder (Saigal 2004) • OFBJP-National Coordinator (OFBJP 2009) • Hindu University of America - Board of Directors (Saigal 2004) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (Saigal 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (VWEF 2004 tax return)
Vijay Pallod	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHPA activist (Giri 2007) • Board of Hindu Students Council (Giri 2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Zone Vice President (IDRF 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media assistance (Giri 2007) 		
Vinod Prakash		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President (IDRF 2010) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors (VWEF 2004 tax return)
Ajay Shah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vhp-america.org, vhp.org, hssworld.org, rss.org, ofbjp.org websites-technical contact (DNS lookup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • idrf.org and letindiadevelop.org technical contact (DNS lookup) 			
Ramesh Shah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFBJP-Vice President (OFBJP 2009) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary (EVFA 2002 tax return) 	
Sonal Shah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VHPA-Governing Council (VHPA 2001) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor of \$10,740 in 2005 (EVFA 2005 tax return) 	

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Appendix B: Listing of U.S. Cities with HSS Shakhas/Balagokulams, 2014**

State	Shakha Locations	State	Shakha Locations
Alabama	No shakhas	Nevada	No shakhas
Alaska	No shakhas	New Hampshire	Durham, Nashua
Arizona	Chandler, Peoria, Phoenix (2)	New Jersey	Bordentown, Edison (2), Iselin, Jersey City, Kendall Park, Metuchen, Parsippany, Pomona, Rockaway
Arkansas	No shakhas	New Mexico	No shakhas
California	Campbell, Cupertino, Foster City, Fremont (3), Irvine (2), Milpitas, Norwalk, Orangevale, Pleasanton, Roseville, San Diego, San Jose (3), San Ramon, Santa Clara, Santa Clarita, Simi Valley, Sunnyvale (4), Temple City, Tracy	New York	Jamaica Queens, Pomona, Rochester, South Ozone Park, White Plains
Colorado	Colorado Springs, Lone Tree, Longmont	North Carolina	Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Greensboro, Morrisville
Connecticut	Stamford	North Dakota	No shakhas
Delaware	No shakhas	Ohio	Cincinnati, Columbus, Dublin, Marysville, Mason-Wester Chester, Willoughby Hills, Worthington
Florida	Jacksonville, Longwood, Orlando, South West Ranches, Tampa (3)	Oklahoma	No shakhas
Georgia	Atlanta (2), Cumming, Johns Creek (2), Riverdale, Smyrna	Oregon	Beaverton
Hawaii	No shakhas	Pennsylvania	Audubon, Exton, Philadelphia
Idaho	No shakhas	Rhode Island	No shakhas
Illinois	Aurora, Bloomington (2), Libertyville, Peoria, Schaumburg, Springfield	South Carolina	Columbia, Greenville
Iowa	Ames, Dubuque, Urbandale	South Dakota	Sioux Falls
Kansas	No shakhas	Texas	Austin (2), Coppell, Flower Mound, Houston (3), Irving, Keller, Kingwood, Pearland, Plano, San Antonio (2), Spring, Sugar Land
Louisiana	No shakhas	Utah	No shakhas
Maryland	Adelphi, Clarksburg	Vermont	No shakhas
Massachusetts	Billerica, Boston, Foxboro, Shrewsbury, Woburn	Virginia	Ashburn, Falls Church, Herndon
Michigan	Canton, Farmington, Midland, Novi, Troy	Washington	Bellevue, Kent, Olympia, Sammamish, Seattle, Spokane, Tukwila, West Richland
Minnesota	Eagan (2), Rochester	Washington DC	No shakhas
Mississippi	No shakhas	West Virginia	No shakhas
Missouri	No shakhas	Wisconsin	Kaukauna, Menasha, Pewaukee, Sun Prairie
Montana	No shakhas	Wyoming	No shakhas
Nebraska	No shakhas	TOTAL	140 (as of May 2014)

Source: HSS website, Chapters (HSS 2014a).

*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups***Acronyms**

AAHOA	Asian American Hotel Owners Association
AHAD	American Hindus Against Defamation
AI	Amnesty International
ANHAD	Act Now for Harmony and Democracy
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CAG	Coalition Against Genocide
CAPEEM	California Parents for the Equalization of Educational Materials
CSFH	Campaign to Stop Funding Hate
ESHI	Educators' Society for the Heritage of India
EVFA	Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation USA
FOSA	Friends of South Asia
HAF	Hindu American Foundation
HCI	Hindu Council Initiative
HICAD	Hindu International Council Against Defamation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSC	Hindu Students Council
HSS	Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh
HUA	Hindu University of America
IDRF	India Development and Relief Fund
IJJ	International Initiative for Justice
IPT	Indian People's Tribunal
IPTK	International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OFBJP	Overseas Friends of the BJP
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SACW	South Asia Citizens Web/Wire
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
VDC	Village Defence Committees
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
VHPA	VHP of America
VHPO	VHP-Overseas
VWEF	Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation
WAVES	World Association for Vedic Studies

Glossary

Adivasi	those of tribal/indigenous communities, literally, "first inhabitants"
Dalit	persons formerly known as "untouchable"
dhvaj	saffron flag
parivar	family
shakha	chapter

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2001 Uniform Business Report, Document 852788. Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc. FEI Number 51-0156235.
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- 2010 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), EIN 51-0156325.
- 2011 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), EIN 51-0156325.
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Vishwa Hindu Parishad Overseas

13. U.S. Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

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- 2002 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Vishwa Hindu Parishad Overseas Inc. (VHPO), EIN 04-3576058.
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Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation

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- 2002 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation (VWEF), Inc., EIN 59-3623323.
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World Association of Vedic Studies

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